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# RHYMES OF THE NORTH

*and*  
*Other Rhymes*

*By*

JOHN A. HACKETT



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## MY NORTHERN HOME

Oh! Northern stretch of wilderness,  
Rivers, lakes and streams,  
From whence do you get your power  
To haunt us in our dreams?

Is it your quiet murmuring  
That calls us soft and low,  
When we visit some foreign country  
Of our childhood long ago?

The cities that we used to love  
In days now long gone by,  
Have lost their great attraction,  
And for our Northern home we sigh.

We miss the cry of the night birds  
From the branches of the pine,  
And the rippling of the rivers,  
And the lakes where the moonbeams shine.

And the grandest of all pictures  
On the long, cold winter nights,  
Is the cloudless, starlit heavens,  
And the glorious Northern Lights.

And even the howl of the coyote  
We hear o'er the city's noise,  
And we long to be back to our home in the  
North,  
And share in real nature's joys.

The people who live in the Old Land  
Shudder at such a life,  
But we've tried them both and are more con-  
tent  
Far away from the city strife.

---

### WHEN THE NORTHERN RIVERS BREAK

I stood on the bank of the River Slave  
At a post called Fort Fitzgerald,  
And I thought of the miles of wilderness  
Between me and the outside world.

The ice was solid for miles above,  
And miles and miles below;  
But the earth was bare, except here and there,  
Were little patches of snow.

I had waited there for many days  
Expecting the water to rise,  
Then I looked up-stream, and my breath came  
quick—  
I could scarcely believe my eyes.

It looked like a mountain rolling down,  
Of water, ice and snow;  
And I looked for a place of safety.  
For the banks where I stood were low

Then I climbed to a rock of granite  
That stood by the river's bank,  
And could plainly hear the rasp and roar  
As the icebergs rose and sank.

And as I stood on that rock and watched,  
The river appeared to me  
To laugh at the blanket of ice that hid  
Its race to the Arctic Sea.

For it broke its bonds with gigantic strength,  
And shattered, like sheets of glass,  
The fields of ice that had barred its way,  
And refused to let it pass.

Then away like a race horse crazed with fear,  
It raced on its northern course,  
And each moment it seemed to gather speed  
And increase its mighty force.

Then I turned my gaze up-stream again  
To where, just a short time before  
Lay fields of ice; there now appeared  
Clear water from shore to shore.

And then, oh joy! around the bend  
Came a steamer with flags unfurled;  
And she looked to me like a phantom ship  
From the other side of the world.

But I soon discovered on her forward flag,  
The letters "H. B. C.,"  
And I said to my self "Oh joy!" again,  
For she sure looked good to me.

I had spent some time in the frozen North,  
And slept beneath a tree:  
It may suit people who love the wilds,  
But it's too close to nature for me!

But I'm due to arrive in the outside world  
Before many days are o'er,  
And can safely say goodbye to the North,  
For I'm coming back no more.

---

### THE KING OF THE NORTH

Out in Northern Alberta,  
Just this side of the Arctic line,  
Dwell the most contented people  
You will find in any clime.

They may talk of kings and princes,  
And men of great renown,  
Who are worrying o'er their losses,  
And their fights to hold their crown.

Do you think they are as happy  
Or as soundly satisfied  
As this Northern brown-skinned hero,  
With his family by his side?

He has no wish for riches,  
Just enough to tide him o'er  
From today until tomorrow,  
He will ask for nothing more.

His home is on the hillside,  
Close beside some rippling stream,  
With the forest spread around him,  
Life is one long pleasant dream.

In the winter in his cabin,  
Or his teepee, or his shack,  
He has stored his winter's ration,  
And nothing does he lack.

Then he laces on his snow-shoes,  
His hunting knife and gun,  
And glides across the frozen snow  
In search of game or fun.

If you watch him as he travels,  
You will see he is intent  
On arriving at a certain spot  
Where small birch tree is bent.

And here you will see a dead-fall,  
A spring trap, or a snare,  
But unless he leads you to it,  
You'd never know it was there.

And this is the beginning  
Of a line for many miles,  
Where traps are set at intervals,  
By the streams and through the wilds.

He travels through the forest,  
With his stalwart form erect,  
With something of the feeling  
Of a president-elect.

For he knows his traps were baited  
With the choicest kind of bait,  
But until his tramp is over  
He does not know his fate.

But it's not so much for worldly game  
Or what a silver fox will bring,  
But to be the greatest hunter  
At the trading post next spring.

For when the winter is over  
And the traps are gathered in,  
He packs his furs together,  
Silver fox and beaver skin.

Then he takes his happy family,  
Of which he loves to boast,  
And guides them through the forest  
To the nearest trading post.

And here he meets his oldtime friends  
That he hasn't seen for years;  
And renews the old acquaintance  
Midst feasting, song and cheers.

And when the trading is over,  
And the wife and little kids  
Have received their summer's clothing,  
From moccasins to lids,

They start upon a visit  
To some nearby tribe of friends,  
And are welcome to remain there  
Until the summer ends.

Then back to winter quarters  
To renew the old trap line,  
With a firm determination  
To be in the lead again this time.

You people of the cities,  
Who in costly mansions dwell,  
Do you think you are more contented  
Than this copper-colored swell?

Who never wronged a neighbor,  
And whose friends are true to him,  
And never feels an ache or pain  
In body or in limb.

I have heard some city people,  
With a long, sad mournful face,  
Pity those poor natives  
As an unhappy ignorant race.

Well, maybe they are ignorant  
Of a city's gilded wings,  
But if you were in the forest  
They could teach you many things.

And as far as being happy  
And contented is concerned,  
He surely has you beaten,  
For this lesson he has learned:

Don't worry about tomorrow,  
For my dinner's in the brook,  
I can secure it in a minute  
With a fishing line and hook.

So, when you feel a sore spot  
Pressing on your heart,  
And you feel you have neglected  
To do your little part

To help those ignorant natives  
Become great and wise like you,  
Just have your doctor examine your head:  
Perchance he'll pull you through.

---

### A NORTHERN DANCE

One dark, dark night  
In a Northern town,  
Not a soul was in sight—  
Not even a sound.

A dim light flickered  
In Barney's store,  
And I watched for the pool room light  
Next door.

Then came Yankee Bill  
With a torch in his hand,  
And lit a match  
On the cider barrel stand.

And soon the room  
Was flooded with light,  
And the rolling of balls  
Was on for the night.

I watched the game  
For an hour or so,  
For I was a stranger  
With no place to go.

But just as the clock struck  
Half past ten,  
The door was entered  
By two young men,

With moccasins new  
And neckties red,  
And wide-brimmed hats  
On the back of their head.

They were the leading boys  
Of this half-breed town,  
And the rest of the bunch  
Soon gathered around.

And one of them said  
As he looked the bunch o'er,  
"Let's make a dance  
In the old drug store."

And, as if by magic,  
The cues were racked  
And the tables deserted,  
And the balls were stacked.

And the entire crew  
Filed out on the street,  
With silk trimmed gauntlets  
And moccasined feet.

"We must have a light,"  
Says one of the bunch,  
"A fiddling man,  
And a midnight lunch."

And I asked Old Bill  
If I'd heard aright,  
Were they arranging a dance  
At that time of the night?

And he says, "My friend,  
Just listen to me:  
Walk down the street,  
And you will see."

I took his advice,  
And followed the crowd,  
Directed by screeches  
And war-whoops loud.

And as I reached  
The old drug store,  
A light was shining  
Through the broken door.

And lo! and behold!  
There came from within  
The sound of a three-stringed  
Violin.

And I said to myself,  
"No dance tonight,"  
For there wasn't a dusky  
Maid in sight.

And what about  
That midnight lunch?  
There wasn't six bits  
In the entire bunch.

Then just behind me  
I heard a giggle,  
And surely I saw  
A dark object wiggle.

Yes, that was the first  
Of the maidens fair  
That came from the brush  
And everywhere.

And inside of a minute,  
I'll bet a cent,  
There were two little maidens  
For every gent.

And under their arms,  
In gorgeous array,  
Was a basket of lunch  
To be raffled away.

But, according to custom,  
The music began,  
And they tripped to the floor,  
Every maiden and man.

There was Isabel, Maggie,  
Julia and Kate,  
'Liza and Janey,  
And Slim's running mate.

Already to balance,  
Sasha or swing,  
In fact, they were ready  
For most anything.

And the director,  
With his arm around Jane,  
Hollered, "Honor your partners!"  
And corners the same.

All join hands  
And circle to the right;  
Gee! I was sure  
There would be doings that night.

But smoothly things seemed  
To be running along,  
Until little fat Julia  
Felt something go wrong.

It all seemed to happen  
In the ladies' sasha,  
When one of her garters  
Had carried away.

It wasn't the kind  
That you buy in the town,  
But a moccasin string  
Wound round and round.

But all credit to Julia,  
She did not despair,  
She was on for that dance  
And was bound to stay there.

Then ladies swing out  
And gents swing in  
But nobody noticed  
That moccasin string.

But it dropped to the floor  
As it slowly unwound,  
Then that beastly director  
Cried, "Swing 'em around!"

Then Slim gave his partner  
A cute little swing,  
And stood on the end  
Of the moccasin string.

Then Julia went down  
Like a colt that was roped,  
And her partner was certain  
His sweetheart was doped.

But she hauled in the string,  
And she sat on the floor,  
And wound it around  
And tied it once more.

Then up on her feet,  
Not worried at all,  
And the director was shouting:  
"Run away all."

Then Julia discovered  
A chance to get in,  
And tightly she wound  
Her fat arms round slim.

Then grand right and left  
With the girl over there,  
And run away all,  
To you know where.

Then, after the dancers  
Had rested themselves,  
The baskets were lifted  
Down from the shelves.

And sold one by one  
To the fellow who knew  
Who packed in the lunch  
In this basket of blue.

But two of those maidens  
Had gave out the news  
They had packed in their baskets  
Two bottles of booze.

Well, bidding was tame  
Till the auctioneer said:  
"How much do I hear  
For this basket of red?"

"Five and a half!"  
"Oh! seven!" says Dick;  
He had raised his own bid,  
And he did it right quick.

The auctioneer tried  
For four bits more,  
And Dick hollered "Eight!"  
And the bidding was o'er.

Then Dick grabbed the girl,  
The basket and all,  
And picked a quiet spot  
At the rear of the hall.

Then into the basket,  
With appetite strong,  
And a thirst that had worried them  
Ever so long.

But, after the eating  
And drinking was o'er,  
This girl from Grande Prairie  
Was glued to the floor.

Oh! horrors of horrors!  
And what a surprise,  
To see this dusky maiden  
Stewed to the eyes!

But she slowly recovered  
And rose to her feet,  
And made for the door  
That led to the street.

But a red river jig  
Was in progress just then,  
And she jumped in and jigged  
With a dozen young men.

But the effort was great,  
And she slowly went down,  
And sat on the floor,  
While the walls spun around.

Then two of the boys  
Who had known her before,  
Picked her up bodily  
And hit for the door.

And that was the last  
Of poor Emma that night,  
But the rest of them danced  
Until after daylight.

But Dick stood and gazed,  
With his brain in a whirl,  
He still held the basket,  
But lost track of the girl.

Then he slowly departed  
With Harry, his friend,  
Who heard Dicky murmur,  
"Never again!"

Then I buttoned my coat,  
For the music had stopped;  
The guests had departed,  
The curtain had dropped.

I have seen Barnum's circus,  
And the elephants prance,  
But they're not in the game  
With this Northern dance.

And the night that I spent  
At this Indian show,  
Passed the time for a stranger  
With no place to go.

---

## DREAMING OF BOOM DAYS

I stood on the bridge at Grouard,  
With my back turned to the West;  
I was dreaming of nineteen-thirteen,  
When the town was at its best.

I dreamt I saw thousands of people  
Headed up this way,  
And a dozen ocean steamers  
Laid at anchor in Hilward's Bay.

The passengers all had come ashore  
In order to make haste  
They were after Grouard real estate,  
And they had no time to waste.

And I thought a chap from Edmonton  
Came strolling up to me,  
And says: "My dear old fellow,  
You're the guy I've been wanting to  
see.

"I've heard you own some real estate,  
Both in and out of this town,  
And I want to purchase a bunch of it,  
And can pay the money down.

"I will give you two million dollars  
For half the lots you hold."  
And he asked me how I would have it—  
In paper or in gold.

I said I would take it in paper  
As it was lighter to carry around;  
And he dumped a bunch of greenbacks  
Beside me on the ground.

Then some foreign noise disturbed me,  
Like the hooting of an owl,  
Or the barking of a husky,  
Or a coyote's mournful howl.

And my toes began to wiggle,  
And my eyes were opened wide,  
And I looked for the bunch of greenbacks  
That had been lying by my side.

But they had surely disappeared,  
And my head began to pain,  
And I'd have given a million dollars  
Just to fall asleep again.

And luck was surely with me,  
For my head began to nod,  
And I leaned against the rail of the bridge  
And grasped a wooden rod.

When I got back to Slumberland,  
And just began to snore,  
That blooming bunch of greenbacks  
Came sailing back once more.

And I thought my old friend Barney  
Came and touched me on the arm,  
Saying: "Don't bother about those green-  
backs, Jack,  
They'll surely take no harm.

"For we all have barrels of money;  
Just this afternoon I sold  
Two or three of my back street lots  
For a million pounds in gold."

Then I began to figure,  
For I had some town lots still,  
And I grabbed a paper and pencil  
And went at it with a will.

The figures amounted to billions,  
Not too much for Grouard land;  
And mine was close to Hughie Hunter's,  
Between Pete Tompkins and George  
Morand.

But I think this billion dollar stuff  
Had given my nerves a shock,  
For I jumped clean over the rail of the  
bridge,  
And landed on the dock.

I looked around for Barney,  
But he had vanished, too,  
And the only person near me  
Was little Skineque.

He said "Mewassin kesekow,"  
(Which means "good-day" in Cree),  
And stood upon one moccasin  
And calmly looked at me.

He said, "My dear old moneyou,  
You are a long way too far West,  
You had better get back to the East again,  
again,  
Where the climate suits you best.

"Kea Namowya mewassin,  
Look up on yonder ridge,  
There we go to sleep in a teepee,  
But never down here on the bridge."

And as he pointed his finger,  
I looked against my will,  
And I saw an old log cabin  
And a teepee on the hill.

One look and I was back to earth,  
But I can tell you what it means  
To be a millionaire in Grouard  
And have it vanish in a dream.

But we have one consolation:  
Grouard is not the only town  
Where the people lost their money  
Or were fleeced both up and down.

For we know a bunch of suckers  
In a town up on the Peace,  
Who spent a million dollars  
Digging holes for axle grease.

The oil has not developed,  
It slipped down to the North Pole,  
And the suckers' only dividend  
Is a snapshot of the hole.

Some invested on Tar Island,  
And some close in, it seems,  
But they have not received a dollar back,  
Not even in their dreams.

---

## VARNEY

Who came from Sweden when a boy  
And landed in New York or Troy,  
Then hit the trail for Illenoy?

Varney!

Who, in the year of ninety-eight,  
Was told about the Golden Gate  
And hit for Klondyke with his mate?

Varney!

But on the way he hit a snag,  
For some one stole his money bag,  
And he was forced behind to lag,  
And never got there.

But Varney never did despair,  
He speared a meal both here and there,  
And when he rode he beat his fare,  
And never thanked them.

He rose each morning with the sun  
And made his way to Edmonton,  
But left again upon the run  
For Athabasca Landing.

Well, there he labored for a-while,  
When things were good you'd see him smile,  
But when they were bad his blood would rile,  
And he would damn the country.

The winter time was coming on,  
And Varney had no clothes to don,  
His hob-nailed shoes were nearly gone,  
But he was gritty.

He slept in Izaac Ganneau's shack,  
The snow was blowing through the crack,  
But Varney snored upon the rack,  
And let her whistle.

He met a chap from near Slave Lake,  
Who told him there was coin to make  
If he had nerve to undertake  
To walk to Grouard.

Well, Varney had the nerve alright,  
So he packed his kit and flew his kite,  
And by evening he was out of sight,  
Up the icy river.

As he hiked along the frozen track  
With a blacksmith's shop upon his back  
And a jackfish froze in a gunny sack,  
He soon got weary.

So he camped with old Jack Knife that night,  
And ate his lunch by candle light,  
And stowed the jackfish out of sight,  
And the gunny sack was empty.

He hit the trail when daylight came,  
His feet were sore and he was lame,  
But Varney stuck and played the game,  
And landed safe in Grouard.

He rented some old-timer's shack,  
And unstrapped the forge from off his back,  
And split the empty gunny-sack  
And made an apron.

And there he pounded horse-shoe nails,  
And mended stoves and pans and pails,  
And lived on moose and beaver tails,  
Just like the natives.

And soon he learnt to talk their tongue,  
He learnt it quick, for he was young;  
And many an Indian song was sung  
While Varney listened.

But Varney was the roving kind,  
And Grouard soon he left behind,  
And went to see what he could find  
At a village on Peace River.

But this was just as bad, or worse,  
And Varney pinched his empty purse,  
And scratched his head and tried to curse  
In English.

But he got a job and took it quick,  
And split some rails for Allie Brick,  
But he hit his foot an awful lick,  
And nearly cut his toe off.

Then back to Grouard Varney came,  
And swore that he would make a name,  
No matter how the money came,  
He'd get it.

First he built a small steamboat,  
But he couldn't get the thing to float,  
And it nearly got poor Varney's goat,  
So he sunk her.

Then he opened up a little store,  
With a pane of glass and home-made door,  
And sat a pool table on the floor,  
And hopped to it.

Now, Varney never played much pool,  
But, just the same, he was no fool;  
His aim was straight, his head was cool,  
And he always got the ten ball.

The cash came in both fast and quick,  
And Varney had his choice and pick  
Of all the land, from Sucked Creek  
To Grouard.

Well, day by day the business grew,  
The freighting teams were passing through,  
And Varney took another chew  
Of Copenhagen.

When Varney's business grew so large,  
He didn't know just what to charge  
For a bully beef or olemarge,  
He charged the limit.

But all the same he got the biz,  
And it surely was no fault of his  
If Isabelle or little Liz  
Didn't spend their money.

Then he built a larger store,  
His business growing more and more;  
Then into real estate he tore,  
And made a boodle.

Then he was elected mayor,  
And stuck right to that honored chair,  
'Till Grouard didn't seem to care  
    If she had a mayor and council.

Well, Varney's still sitting tight,  
And holding on with all his might,  
Money is scarce and sales are light,  
    But you never hear him whimper.

---

### AFTER THE BOOM

I wonder what's the reason  
    That I have such funny dreams  
About the bridge in Grouard?  
    I can't figure what it means.

Sometime ago I had a dream  
    About the days gone by  
Way back in nineteen-thirteen,  
    When things were flying high.

But I had another dream last night,  
    And as it seemed to me,  
'Twas ten years in the future,  
    But as far as I could see,

There was no bridge at Grouard,  
    Nor no Grouard at the bridge,  
Not even that old teepee  
    Standing on the ridge.

But I waded in the water  
Where the old bridge used to stand,  
And met a mammoth jackfish  
Looking for a place to land.

And to my surprise, he murmured,  
As he wiggled on the shore:  
"You may think I'm just a jackfish,  
But I've seen you here before.

"In nineteen-twelve and thirteen  
I was not a jackfish then,  
But just a common sucker,  
Like the other bunch of men

"Who dabbled in this townsite  
And thought they had the earth,  
And would not sell their holdings  
For many times their worth.

"You see that bunch of willows  
A short way up the shore?  
Well, that's the spot where Varney built  
His departmental store.

"And here and there you see a spot  
Where the willow doesn't grow,  
Well, that's the place the moonshine  
Was buried in the snow".

And then this strange old jackfish  
Began to roll and flop,  
And laugh so loud and hearty  
I thought he'd never stop.

But when he finally settled,  
He spread his fins out wide  
And asked me to come closer—  
He had something to confide.

“You will wonder why I’m laughing,  
As if at some funny joke;  
Well, you are the joke I am laughing at:  
You’ve stayed here till you’re broke.

“But you are not the only one,  
There are others did the same,  
They came here with their heads swelled,  
But went out mighty tame.

“But now I must be going,  
For the bay is fine and calm,  
But before I go I’ll tell you  
Why you see me as I am.

“Before I was a jackfish,  
I was a sucker, as you know,  
And got stranded here in Grouard,  
With no place else to go—

“Except up to Peace River,  
Where the other suckers went,  
But suckers must have money,  
I didn’t have a cent.

“But the lake was frozen over,  
And I hit for Sucker Creek;  
But I walked into an air hole,  
And the jackfish got me quick.

“And since then I’ve resided  
In this old jackfish shell,  
Sliding through the rushes,  
And I think it’s just as well

“That no one sees the sucker  
Who bought in Grandview Heights,  
Where fire-flies are shining still,  
And not electric lights.”

Then he says: “Goodbye, old fellow!  
Out here is not my place.”  
So he slid into the water,  
And splashed some in my face.

Then I woke up and rubbed my eyes,  
One look, and then I knew  
That Grouard had been hoodooed,  
My dream would sure come true.

---

### THE FRIENDLY RIVERS

Through Northern woods and inland lakes,  
And among the hills and mountains high,  
The rivers their well-bent pathway take,  
And play with the islands as they pass by.

And even the banks by the river side  
Come in for a share of their frolic and fun,  
As they grasp the pine trees and ask them to  
ride  
To the glorious land of the midnight sun.

And as they travel in friendly style,  
The pine trees floating with graceful ease,  
The river murmurs once in a-while:  
"When you're tired riding, just stop when  
you please."

You may pick your spot and rest for a spell;  
And we'll land you there without adieu,  
And we'll pick you up when the waters swell,  
And the ice in the Spring is passing through.

We've watched them carry their passengers on  
To some quiet spot where the landing was  
good;  
And we've watched in the Spring when the ice  
was gone,  
They had done their work, as they promised  
they would.

---

### THE GOLDEN WEST

When daylight fades, and evening closes  
O'er the western hills and plains,  
And the bluebells and wild roses  
Close their petals once again;

And the night birds in the branches  
Pipe their songs, some soft, some shrill,  
And we hear from nearby ranches  
Cattle low, and all is still,

We feel at peace with all creation,  
Nothing lacking we require,  
All our faith is in our nation,  
Her success is our desire.

We look with pride on all the changes  
Made since we first landed here;  
Railroads span the miles of ranges,  
Towns and cities far and near.

Wheat is ripening in many sections,  
All around us, far and wide,  
Cattle graze in all directions,  
Health and plenty side by side.

Why should we be filled with worry,  
Just because the winter's near?  
Rest at ease; don't fret nor worry;  
Luck is with us, never fear.

We are favored in this country  
Far more so than others are;  
We can thank the chance that placed us  
Underneath a lucky star.

---

## THE TRAPPERS' FRIEND

They talk of lonely places  
In the far off northern wilds,  
Where people live like hermits,  
And no one ever smiles.

Where men with wild set faces  
Are roaming at their will,  
Hiding in silent places,  
Watching their chance to kill.

And other foolish stories  
By people who don't know  
That the loneliest place is a city  
Where thousands come and go.

I have talked to the Northern trapper,  
And men who have spent their lives  
Hunting for hidden treasure  
By the streams and through mountain  
dives.

And they told me surprising stories  
Of the pleasure that they take  
In their camp on the bank of a river,  
Or beside some inland lake.

And I asked if they ever felt lonely  
For the friends they left behind,  
And they showed me the spruce and pine  
trees,  
Saying: "Those are friends of mine."

No one can ever be lonely  
With friends as staunch as they,  
Who spread their branches o'er me  
And shelter me night and day.

And they tell me the rarest stories,  
The rarest that ever were told,  
Of men they had sheltered in days gone by  
And protected them from the cold.

They tell of the hardened old-timer,  
Who knew the Northern game,  
And the boy who left his home in the East  
In search of wealth and fame.

And they say that the most discouraged  
Who say they will never come back,  
Have returned to the North each winter,  
And are seen on the beaten track.

There is some unseen attraction  
That makes you feel at home  
While under a tree in your blankets,  
Watching the starlight dome.

---

## THE WEALTH OF THE NORTH

Can anyone guess the wealth that's stored  
Down near the Arctic line,  
Where Nature guards her golden horde,  
But divulges from time to time.

In ninety-eight the Golden Gate,  
To Alaska's ice-bound shore,  
Was opened wide to the human tide,  
With a maddening rush and roar.

And beneath the soil there are lakes of oil,  
And silver and copper ore,  
And zinc and lead in their granite bed,  
Along each wild lake shore.

Few people know that if they should search  
Along each lake and stream,  
In many a hill and rippling rill,  
They could satisfy their dream.

For the wealth is there for all to share,  
And if each one does his part,  
In years to come great mills will hum  
In what now is the forest's heart.

---

## Camps on the Winter Trail

On a winter's day on a northern river  
Where not many white men had travelled  
before,  
We plodded along, but the frost made us shiver,  
And we asked the Cree driver "How many  
miles more?"

"Oh, maybe a lot, and maybe not many,  
But the camp she come to us after a-while,  
And when we get near it, it's not so much dis-  
tance,  
Maybe a short way or maybe a mile."

Then little was said, but the dogs kept on  
mushing,  
And all of us thought that the trail had no  
end;  
And through our minds one question was rush-  
ing—  
"Will we find that old camp ground around  
the next bend?"

The day was most spent and the night was fast  
falling,  
And many a bend in the river passed by;  
The owls they were hooting, the coyotes were  
calling,  
And the stars they were shining far up in  
the sky.

Then to our ears came the sound of a fiddle,  
And a dim light appeared in a log cabin  
door;

And we all stood and tried to work out the  
riddle,

As some one in English cried "Right, and  
left four!"

We ventured inside and, to our amazement,  
All the floor space was covered with feet;  
You never did see such a funny arrangement,  
All it needed was moonshine to make it com-  
plete.

There were Indian maids in their pink and blue  
dresses,  
And Indian braves decorated with beads;  
To tell where they came from you'd need many  
guesses,  
But it must have been near where the cariboo  
feeds.

They paid no attention to us as we entered  
But hit the high spots in "Run away all,"  
For their hearts and their minds on the dancing  
were centered,  
And the old people stood with their backs  
to the wall.

Such funny expressions were seen on their faces  
As they balanced and swung to the fiddler's  
tune;  
They were eager as schoolboys attending the  
races,  
Or watching a total eclipse of the moon.

Then there appeared on the floor in the centre,  
An Indian brave and his maiden in blue,  
And a Red River jig, where each one could  
enter,  
Was danced to the tune of "Biddy Be True."

They all took a turn, the young and the older,  
And each one tried his partner to beat;  
And every moment the maidens grew bolder,  
And kicked up the dust with their moccasined feet.

They danced until morning, but we had forgotten  
That we had been tired, and hungry, and cold,  
And the time had arrived that our dogs should  
be trotting,  
So into our carriage blankets we rolled.

Such is the life in that far Northern climate,  
And many a traveller has had a surprise;  
There's so much you discover, it's hard for to  
rhyme it,  
And you could never untangle the family  
ties.

---

## LITTLE-GO-GET-IN

In the heart of the wilds lives an Indian maid,  
Who is known as "Little-Go-Get-In,"  
She is lovely and brave, but she will not behave,  
Nor abide by the laws as they're written.

She laughed at her friends who tried to advise  
And tell her how tall she was gettin',  
And how the young pale-face admired her eyes,  
And her form while she's standin' or sittin'.

She turned a deaf ear to the Indian braves  
Who came to make love and adore her,  
And said "Nothing doing! You may be my  
slaves,  
But you will never be anything further."

So she married the pale-face, and after a-while  
She found he had vanished and left her,  
But she tossed her head and said with a smile:  
"He's just number one, and a starter."

She's had several since, and of different kinds,  
They would stick if she would permit 'em,  
But she tells them there's nothing between them  
that binds,  
When she wants them she'll go-get-em.

Little-Go-Get-In, Little-Go-Get-In,  
She can whistle, or purr like a kitten,  
If she does wear a frown and her skin is dark  
brown,  
She's a peach, whether standing or sittin'.

## THE MOUNTIES

We have all read thrilling stories  
Of the West and Western life,  
Of the men who broke the forest trail  
Through suffering, storm and strife.

Of the rustlers on the prairie,  
And the wild men from the woods,  
And the men who went to Klondyke  
And returned without the goods.

But there's many deeds of bravery  
Where the story is never told,  
Of the chap who wears the red coat,  
And his trousers striped with gold.

Those men who guard the rivers,  
The forest and the hill,  
And never fail to capture  
The man who shoots to kill.

They are known as Royal Canadian now,  
Instead of Royal North West;  
It may sound good in many parts,  
But the old name suited best.

For they've made this western country  
A real safe place to live,  
And never shirked their duty,  
But gave the best they had to give.

And many a weary traveller  
Has been cheered along his way,  
For he was protected  
From the human bird of prey.

And through miles and miles of wilderness  
They have travelled all alone,  
To enforce law and order  
And protect the settler's home.

To see them in the cities,  
Or in some western town,  
You'd think they lived on Easy Street,  
With roses strewn around.

But follow this bold mounty  
When the officer in charge  
Has ordered him to capture  
Some criminal at large.

He would lead you through the forest  
Until you're satisfied  
He has earned his reputation,  
Both as officer and guide.

If a river is low he will ford it,  
Or swim it if it is high;  
He has sworn to do his duty—  
He will get this man or die.

And when he makes the capture  
Of this outlaw in his den,  
He shows his human feelings,  
For he's a man with men.

And you will always hear real bad men,  
And men whose crimes are small,  
Speak well of the Mounted Policemen,  
And respect them one and all.

---

## THE WESTERN BOOB

Among the funny sights you see  
While travelling through the West,  
Is the chap just fresh from the eastern town  
Lodging his first protest.

He left his home in Ontario,  
Or some place away down there,  
With a firm determination  
Some western boob to snare.

He said "Just watch me get them,  
They will not be on to my game,  
And I'll get their dough before they know  
Who I am or from whence I came.

But the western boob was waiting,  
Had waited many a day,  
For just such a golden guinea  
To float around his way.

While the chap from the East was waiting  
For some easy mark to land,  
The boob from the West came strolling up  
And grabbed him by the hand.

Saying, "Hello! my dear old fellow!  
Haven't I met you somewhere before?  
Let me see; was it down in Ontario,  
Or was it in Baltimore?

"Your face is surely familiar,  
But I can not recall your name,  
But if you're from the East, you class A1,  
And know how to play the game.

"We need such chaps as you out here  
To help us push ahead,  
For most of the men who live in the West  
Seem to be mentally dead."

The eastern chap was flattered,  
He was taking the bait with ease,  
While puffing a "Quebec Special,"  
And blowing the smoke to the breeze.

He smiled to himself with pleasure,  
And winked at himself with glee,  
Saying "This is the chap I've been looking  
for,  
Who thinks that this is me.

"I will let him think that he knows me  
And make him believe I'm his friend,  
And after I have him buncoed  
He'll know who I am in the end."

So he slapped the boob on the shoulder,  
And asked for a chance to invest  
In some of the best propositions  
That were floating out here in the West.

Then into a real estate office  
In a prominent place in the street,  
With a map of the West in the window  
And a townsite where all railroads meet.

And here in a little back office,  
Where the king of the boobs had his den,  
In a big leather chair with his feet in the air,  
And his ear held a gold-pointed pen.

He looked such an innocent creature,  
He would hand out his coin on request,  
Or would give you a chance in a million,  
If you had the brains to invest.

The eastern guy was bewildered,  
As the king of the boobs showed him how  
He could clear up a million of money,  
If he invested in real estate now.

It didn't take long for to land him  
In the townsite where all railroads meet,  
Where the street cars were running at random  
For they hadn't yet opened the street.

And then to inspect his investment,  
The easterner wended his way,  
But he found that the block he had purchased  
Was somewhere in Buffalo Bay.

Then back to this western city  
To land Mr. Boob in the quay,  
Or make him return his investment,  
He wouldn't use him for a jay.

But he found that the office was vacant,  
The boobs had moved out of town,  
He inquired in every direction,  
But not a trace of the boobs could be  
found.

And then he appealed to His Worship,  
Who had much advice to suggest,  
And this is the place that I left him,  
Making his sad protest.

## DREAMS ON THE TRAIL

We camped all night in a northern swamp,  
On a river's bank among the spruce,  
As we watched the sparks and shadows romp,  
We heard the honk of a lone wild goose.

And Billy Hayes, the engineer  
From way down East where the taters grow,  
Was sure he saw a jumping deer  
Pass in the darkness to and fro.

And Captain Deacon, he was there  
With his blankets wound round him tight,  
He was sure he saw a grizzly bear  
Pass our camp some time in the night.

And I was sure as I could be  
That before I covered up my head  
I saw a wild cat up a tree  
With his green eyes fixed on my spruce bough  
bed.

Then Jock Cunningham rubbed his nose  
And sat up straight with a firm set jaw,  
Then he hollered: "There he goes,  
That's the largest moose I ever saw."

When daylight came we all arose  
And wiped the cinders from our eyes,  
And stretched our limbs and donned our clothes  
But no one showed the least surprise.

Then all hands laughed as at some joke,  
And Billy Hayes turned deathly pale,  
And said that deer I saw last night  
Wore a Stetson hat and a monstrous tail.

Then John Batese, the Indian guide,  
With a face like a slab of hickory bark,  
Says, "How you fellows sleep last night?  
You make funny noise all time in the dark."

But no one answered John Batese,  
And all of us thought that the better way  
To forget our dreams and depart in peace  
Was to hit the trail and have nothing to say.

---

### DREAMS

It's strange the sort of nonsense  
Goes racing through your head  
While stretched for peaceful slumber  
On your little downy bed.

But it isn't always nonsense,  
For sometimes your dreams come true,  
Or you wander back to by-gone days  
With the old-time western crew,

When men of courage hit the trail  
And faced the biting frost,  
And helped each other up the hill,  
No matter what it cost.

When we have dreams of those old days,  
When all was give and take,  
We want to fall asleep again,  
If we should chance to wake.

There was no class distinction then,  
No special privilege shown,  
And each one felt the other's loss  
Was equal to his own.

But when we dream of present days,  
It makes a fellow snore;  
We try to wake and long to place  
Our feet upon the floor.

And when we fully realize  
Our dream was based on facts,  
If we could sleep and never dream,  
We'd sleep on carpet tacks.

I wonder what's the reason  
Some people that you meet  
Don't seem to have the old-time pep  
While walking down the street.

There is surely something missing,  
But we'll find it soon, I hope,  
When we banish prohibition . . .  
That prohibits all but dope.

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## WHO KNOWS?

I watched the sun the other eve  
As it sunk o'er Sunset Bay,  
And its parting rays announced to me  
The close of another day.

I thought of the many heart aches,  
Poor souls on earth had borne  
While the sun was travelling westward,  
Since it rose in the east that morn.

And I thought of the many places  
Where joy and gladness reigned,  
Where the day before was sadness,  
And hands and feet had changed.

And as the shadows faded,  
And slowly sank from sight,  
I thought of the many changes  
Ere they returned with heat and light.

How many homes would be mourning  
Dear friends who had passed away,  
Who had been with them in the evening  
When the sunset closed the day.

And I thought of the little children  
Who would arrive on earth that night  
To gladden some home that was lonely,  
And turn many dark spots light.

This world is not all sorrow;  
There is pleasure here as well,  
But which we get on the morrow,  
Not one of us can tell.

For there are many things that may happen  
In the hours from dawn to dawn,  
That will change the course of a life-time.  
But who knows till the day is gone?

---

## WHEN A FELLOW'S UP AGAINST IT

When a fellow's up against it  
And his nerves are out of whack,  
And he feels himself a-slipping  
And a-sliding down the track,

And he asks a little favor  
Of his friend of better days,  
It is fun to see him wiggle  
In a hundred different ways.

He will tell you hard-luck stories  
And just how his hands are tied,  
And he hasn't been so hard-up  
Since his Uncle Reuben died;

And he's always in a hurry—  
Pressing business on his mind;  
He can not spare a moment,  
His work is all behind.

He knows you don't believe him,  
But he doesn't care a sou,  
And you have no right to blame him  
For not looking out for you.

If we trust to other people  
To straighten our affairs,  
We'll never leave the landing  
At the bottom of the stairs.

Of course, there's many people  
Who will help you in a way,  
And will offer you a mansion  
That's not built of mud and clay;

But they can't produce the title,  
It's held for you in trust,  
You will get it when you shuffle off  
This little ball of dust.

But I know some pious people,  
Just as well as other guys,  
Who are taking lots of chances  
On those mansions in the skies.

They may be straight and honest,  
But some of them, I fear,  
Would change a mansion in the sky  
For a damn small cottage here.

---

### LET'S WANDER BACK

Let us stop for awhile and wander back  
To the days when we thought we knew it  
all,  
And we'll find that many things we lacked,  
And we knew very little, if any at all.

We thought that the parents that brought us up  
Were very much lacking in wordly wise,  
But we would capture the golden cup,  
And build a castle up to the skies.

Well, year by year we worried along,  
Always expecting the next would bring  
Riches and pleasure, music and song,  
Or something that would happen to make  
us a king.

But still we are here in the same old place,  
Striving to keep the wolf from the door,  
And poverty stares us square in the face;  
We must keep digging, then dig some more.

---

### WHO IS TO BLAME?

You talk to the man who has made his pile,  
And started with fifty cents,  
You will notice his blood begins to boil  
When you mention some hard-up gents.

He'll tell you it's just the lack of brains  
That keeps a poor man poor,  
And tell you just how he placed his gains,  
And made his fortune sure.

But many have tried to play the game  
With a firm determined will,  
And finished their lives both tired and lame,  
And poverty with them still.

Some people will tell you that luck alone  
Will bring a man to the front;  
And others will tell you that muscle and bone  
Will do the little stunt.

The man who has made millions of gold  
In a measly miserly way,  
Has left someone out in the cold,  
Just who, it is hard to say.

But you'll generally find if you look behind  
The curtain that covers life,  
The ones who have missed the best, you'll find,  
Were himself, his children and wife.

You never can tell just where you will end,  
Nor just what lies ahead;  
And your luck may break or only bend  
From the start until you are dead.

You have noticed men who have started small,  
Climb to the top with ease,  
And the rich man's son who has spent it all  
Now a drone in this hive of bees.

Or, maybe you've noticed a poor man's son  
Remain as poor as his dad;  
He has fought hard battles, but never won,  
And he's neither sorry nor glad.

Then how are we going to figure it out  
And tell just who's to blame?  
Is it mere luck, without a doubt,  
Or something without a name?

---

## THE LADDER THAT LEADS TO PERFECTION

Does anyone stop when he gets to the top  
Of the ladder that leads to perfection,  
Or does he lean over and then take a flop  
And start off in another direction?

When the years are ahead things look rosy and  
red,  
And we start at the foot of the ladder,  
But near the last rung many lose their head  
And land below wiser and sadder.

But why should we worry or get in a hurry  
To reach that topmost rung?  
For while we are striving, intent on arriving,  
We miss many songs that are sung.

We miss all the pleasure, for we haven't had  
leisure,  
Nor the money to spend at the time;  
But as we grow older our natures grow colder,  
And it wrecks us to part with a dime.

The habit grows stronger, the ladder grows  
longer,  
And each year it is harder to climb,  
For the greater your hoard, the less you can  
afford  
To spend either money or time.

The thing called success often make a great mess

Of a life that would have happier been,  
If they'd been contented, and firmly resented  
The habit of miserly mean.

Just follow the chap who is waving his cap,

And expects all the world to adore him;

You often will find he has things on his mind  
That sooner or later will floor him.

But don't you forget it, you will never regret it,

If you stopped in the thick of a rush

To help some poor neighbor to lighten his labour,

Or some chap that the world tried to crush.

Let us look the world over through thistles and clover,

If you figure it out you will find

They all take a flop ere they get to the top,  
Or land in a mess of some kind.

---

### ALONE AT THE OLD HOMESTEAD

Did you ever watch the sun go down,

When your heart was filled with joy,

When you lived content at the old home,

When you were but a boy?

The ones you loved were with you,

And no dearer spot on earth

Could be found than the little cabin

With the old-time songs and mirth.

But the years have passed since those days,  
Old friends have gone to rest,  
And you sit and watch the sunset  
In the same old golden west.

But oh! the different feeling,  
From your heart all joy has flown,  
And all you have left is a memory,  
As you sit and watch alone.

Is there any spot more lonely  
Than the place you once loved well,  
When the old-time folks were with you,  
While you roamed o'er hill and dell.

The hills are there as in days gone by,  
And the fields are just as green,  
But the ones you loved have left you,  
And have changed the entire scene.

You sit and watch the sunset  
Through eyes bedimmed with tears,  
And no one knows how your heart aches,  
As you sigh for the by-gone years.

---

## WHO WINS?

Who wins the hurly burly race  
That all the earth has entered?  
Is it the chap whose entire thoughts  
On gold alone are centred?

Or is it he whose mind is set  
To fill some high position,  
And by hook or crook he mounts aloft  
And reaches his ambition?

Or is it he who plods along  
And takes things as he finds them,  
And never thinks of future days,  
Or the days he left behind him?

You can not tell by looking on  
Just how a fellow's feeling,  
For he must appear to be content  
When he often feels like squealing.

While walking down a busy street,  
You see some queer expressions,  
And the chap that's taking stock of you  
May have the same impressions.

But no one thinks the joke's on him,  
There's no chance for criticism;  
There's no mistake where we're concerned—  
It's all self-magnetism.

Just take a look at the notorious crook  
Who is always out for plunder,  
He appears A-1, and has the look  
Of a saint from over yonder.

Yet everyone has got their string,  
And must learn how to pull it;  
And some still have that honor thing,  
And some have rashly sold it..

It's hard to say just which one wins,  
For life is such a riddle,  
But half the world must dance a jig,  
And the other play the fiddle.

---

### THE SONGS THAT DADDY SANG

How well we love the old-time songs  
That Daddy used to sing,  
While he poked the fire with tongs,  
He would make the rafters ring.

Way down upon the Swanee River,  
Far, far away,  
There's a gentle voice that calls me ever,  
Just at the break of day.

Maxwellton's braes are bonnie  
Where early fa's the dew,  
'Twas there that Sambo met his honey,  
In her robe of pale sky blue.

Ye banks and braes of bonnie Doone,  
Why can ye bloom sa fresh and fair,  
Beneath the silent, silvery moon,  
And cast your shadows everywhere.

Darling, I am growing old,  
No one seems to care for me;  
Don't leave your honey in the cold,  
But take me home to bide with thee.

Wear a rose of white when you sing tonight,  
For, honey, I'll be there;  
And when the moon is shining bright,  
I'll meet you, Molly, at the fair.

Gone are the days  
When my heart was young and gay,  
I'm not so young as I used to be  
For my hair is turning gray.

Oh! don't you remember sweet Alice Ben Bolt,  
With a voice like a silvery bell?  
When you asked for a drink she would give  
you a jolt  
From the old oaken bucket that hung in the  
well.

I long to hear that song again  
In the shadow of the pine,  
Close to the fields of sugar cane,  
In the days of Auld Lang Syne.

Take me back to Tennessee,  
Where Old Black Joe was born;  
Beneath the shade of the apple tree  
Among the sugar cane and corn.

And many were the songs he sang  
While mother lulled to rest,  
The little chap whose curly head  
Was leaning on her breast.

DARLING, WE ARE NOT GROWING  
OLD

Darling, we're not growing old,  
'Tis just the years that's passing by;  
The story that has oft been told  
Is just the same to you and I.

The spring time rose has left your cheek,  
But the autumn rose is there,  
Blooming bright, and seems to speak,  
Casting sunbeams everywhere.

Tho' your hair is silver white,  
'Tis fairer far than locks of gold;  
And if your eyes are not so bright,  
They a grand life's story hold.

I would not ask the days return  
When golden ringlets graced your brow,  
And wait the pleasure I have earned,  
To see you as I see you now.

When at last we're laid at rest,  
This simple story may be told  
On the stone above our breasts:  
Always young, but never old.

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## PARSON JONES

Parson Jones' congregation  
Dwindled down to just a few,  
And he was filled with consternation,  
Scarcely knowing what to do.

And then he thought of Elder Bower,  
Who had brains, and skill, and tact;  
And he knew in half an hour  
He could bring the wanderers back.

So he asked the Elder plainly  
Just what course would be the best;  
And the Elder answered, "Mainly,  
Let prohibition have a rest.

"No one wants to hear you preaching  
Prohibition and such trash;  
What they want is honest teaching,  
Liberty, and not the lash.

"All the people won't be driven  
Into thinking what you think,  
That they'll never be forgiven  
If they drink a healthy drink..

"When you preach on Sunday morning,  
Don't predict the Nation's fall  
If they do not heed your warning;  
That old stuff don't go at all.

“Then you preach on Sunday Closing  
Of the playgrounds, parks, and such;  
Don’t you think that you’re imposing  
On the people rather much?

“You have all the week to ramble  
Through the parks, or where you will,  
But your neighbor—he must scramble  
For cash to pay the grocery bill.

He scarce had time to eat his dinner,  
Through the six days of the week,  
Then you tell him he’s a sinner  
If Sunday pleasure he should seek.

“Join the League, my dear old brother!  
Preach for freedom, plump and plain;  
Then we’ll gather, all together,  
In your little church again.”

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## BE A SPORT

Don't bow your head and lose your nerve  
Because you have left fifty years behind;  
Remember, you still have time to serve,  
And can win out, if you have a mind.

Don't think because you hit it hard,  
That nothing you touch will turn out right;  
Just hit it again and play your card,  
It may not win, but still it might.

You never know just what's ahead,  
So bow your neck and throw out your chest;  
You're liable to roll in a downy bed,  
So take a chance along with the rest.

You haven't had your last chance yet,  
There is always a chance till the light goes  
out;  
So pick a winner and place your bet,  
And show the world you're a good old scout.

THE END











